TAKEN FROM THE ENEMY.

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CHAPTER XII.—(CONTINUED).

But when the 2d and 3d of May had come and gone and still not a speck was visible upon the vast expanse of ocean around them, he took a more serious view of the matter, and thought it his duty to speak about it.

"Johnstone," he said, when the others had retired for the night, "have you taken your bearings today? Do you know where we are?"

"Yes, sir; within an easy day's sail of the island."

"Then we shall have been twelve days coming a thousand miles. How's that?"

The other was silent.

"I told you," Dick continued, "that I should hold you answerable; now I give you warning that I'm not satisfied so far."

"I'll warrant you'll be satisfied enough by this time tomorrow," grumbled Johnstone, in a low voice.

Estcourt turned away, pretending not to hear this remark, which, however, in the sense in which he took it, struck him as being a just enough retort.

That night the wind rose again, and the sky next morning was once more completely overcast; about noon wet squalls began to strike the ship.

When the rain ceased for a time, toward sunset, Johnstone came down to the saloon to tell them that the island was in sight.

Dick and Camilla went up together on deck.

"There," he cried, as he stepped from the main hatch, "she's on the larboard bow. I knew the fellow had gone wide of his course."

And in fact the island, which should have lain before them to the right, was visible just upon the lefthand side of the line of the bowsprit.

Camilla scarcely heard his exclamation. She was standing motionless, with one hand on the capstan to support herself, gazing aloft at a small flock of birds that were wheeling swiftly round and round the topmasts.

Dick turned to speak to her, and started to see the look of bewilderment upon her face. He followed her glance upward, and was even more amazed.

"St. Helena!" he murmured. "Great heaven! what can this mean?" And he ran downstairs to find Johnstone, shouting for him by his name.

The voice of M. de Montaut answered him from the captain's cabin; the door was ajar, and he stepped hastily in.

On one side stood Johnstone and the colonel, on the other side lay the captain's berth; it was empty.

"Where is Worsley?" he cried, in fresh astonishment.

Johnstone laughed; the colonel held up his hand to rebuke him.

"What does all this mean?" Dick exclaimed. "We are at St. Helena!"

"My dear Estcourt," said the colonel, "I have long owed you an explanation; if you will come into the saloon I shall be happy to give it you."

CHAPTER XIII.

DICK entered the saloon with an ominous foreboding that a struggle was at hand. M. de Montaut followed close behind him, and after entering locked the door and put the key in his pocket. Dick took no heed of this action. It could not have been aimed at him, for in strength of body he was easily the other's superior.

They sat down at the table opposite to one another. The colonel looked fixedly into his companion's face. It was essential that he should realize exactly the mood with which he had to deal. Dick fronted him with an uncompromising frown.

"Well!" he said, "your explanation, sir!"

The colonel took his gravest air of courtesy.

"Some time ago," he began, "my sister-in-law and I found ourselves in need of a loyal friend. Chance threw you in our way. I esteemed, and she enthusiastically believed in, you. After careful consideration I invited you to help us."

"And you had your answer," replied Dick, shortly.

"For the moment, yes; and a great disappointment it was. But fortune has now given us another opportunity and we hope to be more successful this time in persuading you."

"Never!" said Dick. "Is that all?" And he rose from his seat as if to close the conversation.

A noise was heard at the door; Camilla was trying the handle.

"Is M. de Montaut there?" she cried. "I must speak to him at once."

"Certainly," replied the colonel, from within; "in five minutes' time, if you will excuse us for so long; we have matters of importance to discuss."

She turned away toward her own cabin, and he began again, inviting Dick with a polite gesture to resume his seat at the table.

"You may perhaps have overlooked the fact," he said, "but the situation is entirely changed since your letter of refusal was written. We were in safety there in London: here, at St. Helena, we are in peril of our lives; our train is fired, we must abide by the result; if you fail us now we are ruined."

Dick made an impatient gesture, but he sat on, and his face changed. The colonel pressed his point.

"For myself," he said, "I trust I may say that I am not afraid. I have escaped from prison more than once, and at the worst I can face death. But the thought of Camilla's fate is more than I can bear."

He paused, and then went on in a low, agitated voice:

"My friend," he said, "have you ever seen a French convict-ship? I have. It is many years ago, but the recollection of those stifling cages and the mass of scarcely human misery huddled behind the bars is a nightmare with me to this day." Dick's breath hissed inward through his teeth.

"Silence!" he said, sternly. "Not another word, or I strike!" The colonel did not flinch.

"Strike, and welcome," he replied, "if you think that will save her."

"No," said Dick, "nothing that I can do will save her; it would take the sacrifice of my honor, and that I can not offer nor she accept."

"Your honor?" said the colonel. "Surely it is too late to speak of that now."

"Why so? Why late?"

"Because it has long been compromised beyond retrieving."

"What do you mean?"

"My dear Estcourt," said the colonel, in his most serious and reasonable tone, "I see that you don't understand the gravity of your position. Let me put it briefly before you. You will remember that one day in March last I wrote a letter asking you to join in this expedition of ours, and naming a place of rendezvous in case of your assenting to my proposal. You kept that appointment, and were then and there introduced to your fellow-conspirators."

"Nonsense!" interrupted Dick. "You know I wrote the same evening to explain that mistake."

"Indeed?" replied the colonel, coldly. "It is odd that my servant never brought the note to me."

"No!" cried Dick, remembering the shadow on the blind in Bedford Square. "No, but I saw you take it from the letter-box yourself."

"Unfortunately," said the colonel, "I have no recollection whatever of doing so. If I ever did it, I feel sure that nothing will recall it to my mind, and as no one else seems to have known of the existence of the letter, I fear that this part of your argument breaks down for want of corroboration."

"No matter," retorted Dick, triumphantly; "I can prove, for all that, that I never thought of accepting, for I didn't get your letter until after I came back from Russell Street."

"Excuse me," said the colonel, "but your own servant has sworn that you opened it before 11 o'clock that morning."

"Sworn? My own servant? To whom?"

"To me. She mentioned the matter when I called for you one day before leaving town, and told me that you had scolded her and quarreled with your lawyer, Mr. Wickerby, about the seal of the letter, which she is certain you broke yourself."

Dick was silent, and turned in his chair with an angry and impatient movement. He remembered too well the overwhelming manner in which Mr. Wickerby had marshaled the evidence against him that afternoon, and was staggered to find how fatal had been his contemptuous disregard of that worthy gentleman's advice. Clearly the battle was going against him here, and he fell back upon his third line of defense.

"What is the use," he cried, "of arguing about that? If the truth were known, I believe you broke the seal yourself. But what does it matter now? The best proof that I scorned your treasonable offers is that I came away directly afterward on business of another kind."

"I see no evidence of that," replied the colonel; "you sailed without us, it is true, but you rejoined us at Cape Verd, and have come with us to St. Helena."

"Not of my own knowledge or free will. I sailed for the Cape, as every clerk in the Admiralty knows, and as this letter will show beyond dispute." And he took from his pocket the paper containing the instructions for his voyage and held it up.

The colonel did not offer to read it. "I am very much afraid," he said, "that that letter never saw the inside of the Admiralty; and as for his majesty's ship Niobe, I know that she is in the Madras roads, sound from stem to stern, with her full complement of officers and men."

"Look here," said Dick, with ominous calmness, "let me tell you this. I came here innocent, and I am going back innocent. You have, by shameful deceits and devilish cunning, brought me with you so far, but nothing you say or do or threaten can move me a hairbreadth farther. Without my help your plot will fail, as you yourself know well. And when you are in Malcolm's hands we'll see whether he'll believe you or me first."

The colonel did not betray it by so much as the trembling of an eyelid; but this last stroke of Dick's was a downright blow, and might, if not parried, mean the ruin of his whole fabric of ingenious policy. His manner, accordingly, became lighter and more indifferent.

"Come, come, my dear Estcourt," he said, "you are taking the matter too seriously. I don't think you realize what it is I am asking of you. I don't, of course, expect you to take any responsibility for our plan, or to do anything which could be censured as a breach of duty or the rules of your service. I only ask you, in the absence of Captain Worsley, to take command of the Speedwell for twenty-four hours, and bring her to anchor off the island here until tomorrow night. On Sunday morning we shall be ready to sail again. What we do in the meantime can not be laid to your charge—if, indeed, it were ever discovered—for you know nothing of our designs, as we would all bear witness in case of need."

Dick rose. "Colonel de Montaut," he said, in a stern, incisive tone, "I have borne with you so far, and I am ashamed of my own patience. Every word you utter is a fresh insult," he exclaimed, with a sudden fury in his eyes; "and if you do not leave me instantly, before God I will avenge myself!"

The colonel unlocked the door without a word. With great alacrity he slipped out and locked it again on the other side. As he did so he heard a light footstep hastily retreating. He followed immediately, and was in time to see the door of Camilla's cabin softly closed. He approached noiselessly, and listened outside in his turn. She was sobbing, and if the colonel had not been somewhat flustered by his late unceremonious dismissal, so keen an observer would have noted that her sobs were the quick, half-laughing utterance of intense relief. But he was not now concerned with Camilla's feelings. He had Estcourt yet to conquer, and he went off in search of Johnstone to help him in the struggle.

The colonel explained the position to him from beginning to end. "Now," he said in conclusion, "you see the one thing absolutely necessary. So long as he hopes to clear himself with Malcolm he will defy us. Once let him commit himself too far for that, and he is ours body and soul."

"What do you want him to do?" asked Johnstone. "You give it a name, and I warrant I'll make him do it."

"Yes," replied the colonel, "I think it is time that you tried your hand now. The game of skill is up, and we must see what force can do for us. I want him to write a letter to Admiral Malcolm asking for permission to anchor the brig off Jamestown for twenty-four hours. He needn't write the whole letter even. I can do it for him, provided he signs it. He can't draw back after that."

"That'll do," said Johnstone. "I'll see to it, never fear!"

"I'll have the letter ready after supper, then," said the colonel, as he went below; "and remember that if he refuses to sign when I ask him, I shall leave him to you at once; but of course you will avoid taking any irretrievable step until the last possible moment."

"I understand," answered Johnstone, with a grin; obstinate as ever he likes, he shan't meet with a fatal accident, not till the guardboat men set foot on board; after that I can't answer for what may happen. It's a long fall into the hold, and some folks are so careless of themselves."

The brutality of this jest displeased the colonel, who was above all things a man of taste; but he could not afford just now to be critical of his tools, so he let it pass without rebuke, and went to order supper.

The meal was served to Dick in the saloon, with Johnstone on guard at the door; to the colonel alone in the captain's room; Camilla, locked in her own, refused all persuasion to eat or drink.

A long time passed, and silence reigned unbroken between the decks of the Speedwell.

It was nearly midnight when Camilla at last heard her brother-in-law leave his cabin and call Johnstone. The two men spoke together for a moment in a low voice and then entered the saloon.

Dick started up as they came in; he looked tired and grim; his cheeks were sunken, and furrowed with lines that told of anger and determination.

"Perhaps," said the colonel, "you have now thought matters over and are prepared to reconsider your decision. I do not wish to be unreasonable, and I am ready to meet you half-way; all I now ask is that you should demand permission to anchor from your old friend Sir Pulteney Malcolm. It is a most natural request to make, and in fact no more than is really necessary for the safety of the vessel in such weather as this."

Dick kept a scornful silence.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Fine and Ruffled Lawn.

The use of fine and ruffled lawn has extended to the skirt and some new models are made to fall open in front over a petticoat of flounced lawn. A voluminous Louis XVI. beruffled fichu of the same lawn completes a gown that except for the large sleeves would be characteristic of the close-shouldered period. Certain it is that if looseness of bodice and befrillment of skirt prevail, there will be a change in sleeves. For fashion has, after all, her idea of proportion, and she never dictates the swelling of more than one feature of a gown at a time.

CORNER OF ODDITIES.

SOME QUEER AND CURIOUS PHASES OF LIFE.

Some Strange and Startling Stories of Adventure Recently Recorded—Readable Scraps of Anecdote and Incident Reported by Our Exchanges.

I'T had I heard of Lucy Gray,
And when I crossed the wild
I chanced to meet at break of day
That solitary child.
She had a latchkey in her hand;
She smoked a large cigar;
She was not, you must understand,
As other women are.
The moral is, I must allow,
What any one can see—
That girls are not constructed now
The way they used to be.

Pinkerton's Reputation.

Detective William Pinkerton purchased three fine Japanese pugs of a local fancier a few days ago.

"Can you give me a bill of sale?" he inquired.

"Certainly, if you wish it."

"I do; and just put a description of the dogs in it, will you?"

"Well—er—Japanese pugs are hard to describe, because they are all alike, but I will try," promised the breeder.

"You couldn't mark them so that there could be no mistake, could you?"

"What, with a swallow fork or an under bit in the ear?" asked the surprised breeder.

"No, I don't want them mutilated," declared Pinkerton.

"Do you want a horse brand stuck on them?"

"No, of course not."

"Then I don't know how I can mark them."

"Well, you wouldn't mind making an affidavit that I purchased these dogs from you, would you?"

"No; not if you will pay for it."

"All right; bring the pups over to the office of Chief of Police Crowley, will you?"

The dealer suspected a trap. He did not know but that the Chicago detective was planning his arrest for some crime and had resorted to that ruse to land him in jail without a struggle. He hesitated for some moments, but decided that the best thing to do was to face the music. So he tucked the pups under his arm and walked over.

"Chief," said Mr. Pinkerton, as they entered police headquarters, "I have bought these dogs from this man, and he has given me a bill of sale and an affidavit to that effect. Will you give me a certificate stating that you saw the sale consummated?"

"Certainly, if you want it," said the chief, "but what are you so particular about?"

"Well, I'm going to take these dogs back to Chicago, and I have a reputation there," explained Pinkerton.

"You are not afraid of being accused of stealing the dogs, are you?"

"That's exactly what I'm afraid of. You see, every fine dog that gets loose in Chicago is picked up by some one. I usually have about twenty dogs, and it has got so that every time a good dog is missed, the owner says: 'Well, I guess Billy Pinkerton must have picked him up.' They're taking dogs away from me all the time, and I want to keep these."

The bill of sale, the affidavit and the certificate were all made out.

Birds Frightened to Death.

"I believe birds are the most sensitive little creatures on earth," remarked a Kearney street dealer yesterday. "I have frequently found cases that looked suspiciously like suicide after separating birds that had been kept in the same cage for a long time, and there is hardly a day that some of my birds are not killed by fright. Any loud or strange noise or the sudden appearance of a strange animal will scare them to death.

"On several mornings upon opening up the store I found dead canaries in their cages. I put them out of the way of all animals and I knew nothing could get at them to kill them. I was at a loss for the cause and changed their food, but still I would find dead birds every morning. Once after I opened the store a big gray rat ran across the floor and I saw a canary flutter around the cage a moment and then drop dead. I set a trap, caught the rat, plugged up the hole through which he came, and had no more dead birds.

"One night a little monkey got loose in the place and the next morning I found two dead canaries and one dead parrot. Not a feather had been disturbed on them so I know the monkey did not kill them.

"Whenever a brass band passes the place I have to close my doors or I will find some of the birds frightened to death by the unusual noise, though a music box will make every bird in the store delirious with joy. Their sensitive ears are not attuned to the heavier harmony of a military band.

"Young birds just brought to the store are frequently frightened to death by the screeching of a parrot or the yelping of a pup, and a mischievous boy killed one of my parroquets by touching off a firecracker near its cage. An alarm clock will throw the whole aviary into hysterics."

A Case of Abandonment.

A ring for a messenger went in from an Eddy street lodging house yesterday, and the boy who responded found a man walking nervously up and down in front of the house with a bundle of flannels in his arms. He was shaking it up and down and saying:

"Shh-h-h; sh-h-h-h! Here take this down to the drug store on the corner and tell them it is for Dr. Deane."

"Another kid they want to get rid of," muttered the boy.

He carried the bundle carefully to the drug store and laid it on the counter with the information:

"Here's somethin' a feller sent down for Dr. Deane."

"No you don't. You just pack that out of here," ordered the druggist. "This is no foundling asylum. I've seen that kind of a parcel before."

A faint cry came from the parcel.

"There, I told you. I'm onto that game. Take it out."

"Where to?" asked the boy.

"Well, you may find Dr. Deane at the Receiving Hospital."

A policeman stopped the boy a block away and asked him what he had.

"A kid feller wants me to take to Dr. Deane."

"Ah, ha! Another case of abandonment. Where did you get it?"

The boy gave all the details and a description of the man. The officer then ordered the boy to take his charge to the Receiving Hospital. He found Dr. Deane there and delivered the parcel.

"What do I want of a baby?" roared Deane. "Where's the matron?"

The doctor unwrapped the flannels.

"Oh—yes—that's all right, boy. This is the pug pup Berry promised to leave at the drug store for me."

A Molasses Pavement.

Perhaps the oddest pavement ever laid is one just completed at Chino, Cal. It is made mostly of molassess, and if it proves all of the success claimed for it it may point a way for the sugar planters of the south to profitably dispose of millions of gallons of useless molasses which they are said to have on hand. The head chemist of a sugar factory at Chino, Mr. E. Turke, was led to make certain experiments, of which the new sidewalk, a thousand feet long, from the factory to Main street, is the result. The molasses used is a refuse product, hitherto believed to be of no value. It is simply mixed with a certain kind of sand to about the consistency of asphalt, and laid like an asphalt pavement. The composition dries quickly and becomes quite hard, and remains so. The peculiar point of it is that the sun only makes it dryer and harder, instead of softening it, as might be expected. A block of the composition, two feet long, a foot wide, and one inch thick, was submitted to severe tests and stood them well. Laid with an inch or so of its edges only resting on supports, it withstood repeated blows of a machine hammer without showing any effects of cracking or bending.

A Lazy Man's Labor Lightened.

He can be seen at Longport, near Atlantic City, New Jersey, and is probably as lazy as any amateur fisherman that ever baited hook or hooked bait. He was seen the other day with three lines in the water. He was catching as many fish as the others with considerably less effort. The lines of this ingenious individual were fastened to small pieces of umbrella ribs about twelve inches long. About one inch from the end of the wires were fastened small sleigh-bells. When he cast the line into the water he drew it taut and then stuck the wires into the ground. When a fish would nibble at the bait the bell would jingle and thus draw the attention of the fisherman to the line. It is beautiful. The old man drops his fish a line, and when they call on him they ring a bell. He is not compelled to think, everything is so comfortable about him.

A Mathematical Wonder.

When Zerah Colburn, the Vermont mathematical "prodigy," visited Harvard College, he told in four seconds the exact number of seconds in eleven years, and answered other similar questions with equal facility. He could no more tell how he did it than a child in singing can tell the laws of melody, but it is certain that it was done under natural law and not in opposition to it. It is hardly doubtful that all such laws are extremely simple, and that they will be discovered as soon as investigators cut loose from accepted theories and apply modern scientific methods of persistent experiment and comparison to mathematics. It ought to be taken for granted, when such unexplained phenomena are witnessed, that "the last word" has not been said in mathematics or anything else.

Earl Cadogan, lord lieutenant of Ireland, and Lord Halsbury, the lord chancellor, are the only two members of the new British cabinet who are absolutely whiskerless.